UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/AC.51/1992/L.5/Add.3
15 September 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND
COORDINATION
Resumed thirty-second session
31 August-18 September 1992
Agenda item 9

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS RESUMED THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

II. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

C. Methodology for the preparation of the programme budget

1. At its 24th to 28th meetings, on 1 to 3 September, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the prototype of a new budget format (A/C.5/47/3).

2. The Committee recalled the recommendation it made on the prototype at its thirty-first session.

Discussion

3. Some delegations called for a study on the proper way of presenting capital expenditures in the programme budget, while other delegations called for a review of the structure of the medium-term plan and the programme budget.

4. A number of delegations considered the seminar on the methodology of the programme budget successful and the output useful.

5. The Committee was informed that section 19 (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)) was chosen as an example for the prototype because of its typicality.

6. A number of delegations cautioned against an increased amount of data and information and warned of the danger of micromanagement and the potential increase in the size of part two of the programme budget. Other delegations considered detailed information necessary.

7. A number of delegations were of the view that an indication of low priorities should be eliminated.

8. A number of delegations called for the consolidation of budget sections; others cautioned against that attempt.

9. One delegation suggested that the provision for staff assessment and income from staff assesment be deleted from the programme budget.

10. A number of delegations drew attention to the Financial Regulations and Rules concerning the transfer of resources between sections of the budget.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. With regard to the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the changes in the presentation of the programme narrative. The Committee also approved methodological changes such as the treatment of non-recurrent expenditures, capital expenditure and calculation of real rates of growth, on the understanding that further information on inflation, currency fluctuations and related technical issues would be provided by the Secretariat to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly.

12. The Committee recommended that the programme budget be presented in two parts; the Secretariat, in preparing that document, should emphasize simplicity and readability.

13. The Committee welcomed the proposal to highlight in the first part of the programme budget changes in programmes, including new and terminated activities; the Committee trusted that such changes would also be appropriately mentioned in the second part of the document presenting estimates by section. In general, the Committee recommended that the quality and exactness of the narrative be improved.

14. The Committee concurred with attempts at rationalizing the number and presentation of tables and annexes which accompany the text of the proposed programme budget.

15. The Committee emphasized the relationship between the budget and the medium-term plan. It noted that an improved programme budget from a programmatic viewpoint was still not a replacement for the medium-term plan. The Committee also emphasized the link between the budget and the outline.

16. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly give due attention to issues such as the relationship between mandates and programmes and the relationship between the structure of the Secretariat and the structure and number of sections of the programme budget.

17. The Committee recognized the need for the direct responsibility of programme managers in the implementation of mandated programmes. It emphasized that responsibility and accountability, as well as improvements in the techniques and methodology for evaluation and budget and programme performance reports, were essential for progress in the implementation of the programme budget and in the capacity of Member States to assess accurately the implementation of their mandates and decisions.

18. The Committee welcomed efforts at presenting in a uniform manner regular budget and extrabudgetary resources; the Committee acknowledged, however, the difficulties involved in forecasting levels of extrabudgetary resources and expressed the hope that improvements would be forthcoming.

19. The Committee welcomed the effort to rationalize tables in the budget wherever possible.